



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Medical Assistance Administration, P.O. Box 45010, Olympia, Washington 98504-5010

June 17, 2003

Dear Dental Stakeholders:

The 2003 Washington State Legislature has now finalized the state budget, including a directive that Medical Assistance Administration trim its adult dental benefit by 25 percent. Because the new fiscal year begins July 1, 2003, and because that cut represents about \$1.2 million a month, we need to act quickly to develop the alternative benefit design. Our hope is to have this coverage outlined and in effect by August 1, 2003.

Although time is short, we would appreciate any input or feedback you can provide. Our intent is to preserve the core services that protect and restore oral health – the best care we can provide to our clients with the dollar limit we have been assigned. The program has been modified within these budgetary constraints to provide diagnostic, preventive, restorative, endodontic and periodontal services, pain relief, extractions, full dentures and adjunct services.

I am attaching a list of services that we have calculated to fit within the dollar limit. In general, this list should ensure the continuation of the adult dental program. We will no longer be able to cover crowns, partial dentures, replacement dentures and other services. In cases where the client desires services not covered, payment for those services would have to be borne by the client or other sponsors.

We welcome your review of this list as well as any comment you may have. If you disagree with our prioritization and suggest retaining a service that is not covered, please tell us what services you think should be eliminated instead. I apologize for the urgency of this matter, but we will only be able to accept comments filed by June 30, 2003.

Please send your comments to us electronically at dentalmaa@dshs.wa.gov by June 30. Although we urge electronic responses, we also are establishing a message line at (360) 725-1744 for queries.

I also want to assure you that this will not be your last chance to comment on this issue. Our plan is to put the legislative cut into effect quickly, but we will initiate a more comprehensive review in coming months. That will certainly include a greater opportunity for stakeholder feedback and to modify the coverage as appropriate.

Sincerely,

Douglas Porter, Assistant Secretary
Medical Assistance Administration